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A PUBLICATION OF Children's Trust Fund

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UPDATE FROM EMILY:

Emily interviews Governor Mike Parson on the new Office of Childhood

Recently, I had the opportunity to sit down with Governor Mike Parson and **really get his take** on Missouri's new Office of Childhood, its impact on children in our state, and his personal experiences with kids.

I hope you'll take a **moment** out of your day to [watch, listen, or read some excerpts from our interview](#) – I asked some important questions, like "How is early childhood related to workforce and infrastructure?" and, "What is your dream for Missouri children?"

I also wanted to share this [brief 4 minute informational video](#) that brings several important perspectives together. I hope it energizes you and helps you have confidence in the **big steps being taken in Jefferson City** to invest in Missouri's kids and align the efforts of our state's departments and agencies.

Together, we are creating the world we want for our kids.

Emily: Why did you decide to create an Office of Childhood?

Governor: First, we have to really admit that we were not very good at what we were doing. We had multiple departments, multiple divisions, multiple agencies, that couldn't even communicate with one another. This is going to give us an opportunity to rebuild early childhood development in the state of Missouri—it's a fresh start. If there is ever a time to do it, now is the time.



Emily: Can you tell us a little bit about why you have incorporated early childhood as part of your priorities in workforce and infrastructure, and how is early childhood related to workforce and infrastructure?

Governor: Everybody says people getting out of school are not prepared for the workforce. So, what are the tools they need to be successful? They've got to have basic skills. They've got to be able

to read, to know math, to know science, they've got to be able to know all of those things that you learn as a child. For years, we didn't invest on that end of it and what did we do? We paid the price on the back end of it, which is much more expensive.

Emily: What do you hope this new office will accomplish for Missouri children?

Governor: I think it gives a kid a chance. If you really go to make a difference, it's got to be with giving a child the opportunity to do things. And they become better citizens. I don't know if they're going to get four year degrees; I don't know if they're going to go into the military; I don't know if they're going to own their own business someday, but I sure want them to have a chance. The only way they'll get a chance if someone pays a little attention to them on the front end to give them the opportunities and skills they need that will teach them what they're going to need for life skills later on.

Emily: So, you were a county sheriff for a good part of your career, and a member of the Senate. When did early childhood become an issue that you cared about?

Governor: When I think being back in the sheriff days, you see the worst part of society sometimes. You really do. You see difficult situations that adults are in, that they put their selves in. But you can almost trace it back to their roots. You have children in that environment too. If you're not going to give them an opportunity, a way out of that, we're kidding ourselves if we think it's going to get better. That's where early childhood development comes in.

Emily: When you were raising children, what were the most important things you and the First Lady tried to teach your children?

Governor: Oh, I am a red white and blue guy. Ever since I went in the army, my mom used to fly a flag on the front porch. I thought it was important for my kids and grandkids and I flew a flag at my own home. I think it's important for my grandkids to understand the importance of who we are and why we're here today and what people did before us to sacrifice for them. I also think being an example. It's not easy being a parent sometimes; you have to make decisions that are really the best for the child. Might not always make them happy, maybe not always make you happy but that's our responsibility.

Emily: Do you have any parenting moments that have stayed with you until now? Moments of connection or learning?

Governor: They've taught me a lot of things. One of the great things about kids is that they are just as honest as they can be. And sometimes for all of us, it's a little tough to be that way. My children, I always thought they made me better. They made me work a little harder to be a better person and I think, for the most part, to be an example. I joke around all the time when I'm talking to groups or people out there if there's kids around, I always tell the kids, hey I am going to tell you a secret about the Governor. You know, I like kids a lot better than I do adults. And there may be some truth to that.

Emily: I have to say, I always love the pictures of you with your kids because you can just see your joy and their joy, and that's really what it's all about.

Governor: You know what, nothing makes me any happier than being around some kids. Truly I've lived the American dream. Coming from where I came from, serving this country, being in law enforcement, all of the things I've done in my life, and I've enjoyed every bit of it and I think I want to make sure in this role that I can pass the American dream down to other kids. To give them a shot at it, what they do with it, I don't know but they've got to have the opportunity.

Emily: All right, we have one last question for you: What is your dream, hope, or aspiration for Missouri children?

Governor: That they all have a shot at the American dream. I want them all to be educated, I want them to have a job, and I want them to enjoy life. I want them to be happy every day when they live their lives.



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Learn more about the new Office of Childhood



Related article: "5 things you need to know about Missouri's new Office of Childhood"

To learn more about the Office of Childhood, please go to:

<https://earlyconnections.mo.gov/who-we-are/new-office-childhood>

GRANTS:

CTF set to award \$4.5 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds

CTF has received **\$4.5 million** in supplemental *Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention* (CBCAP) funding as part of the *American Rescue Plan*, and is in the process of developing a plan to release these funds. CBCAP funding can be used for the development, maintenance, improvement, and coordination of initiatives and local programs designed to foster parent leadership, strengthen families, and **prevent child abuse and neglect**. All CBCAP lead agencies were strongly encouraged to solicit input from stakeholders on the needs that families are continuing to experience as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to use this feedback when developing a spending plan for their supplemental grant.

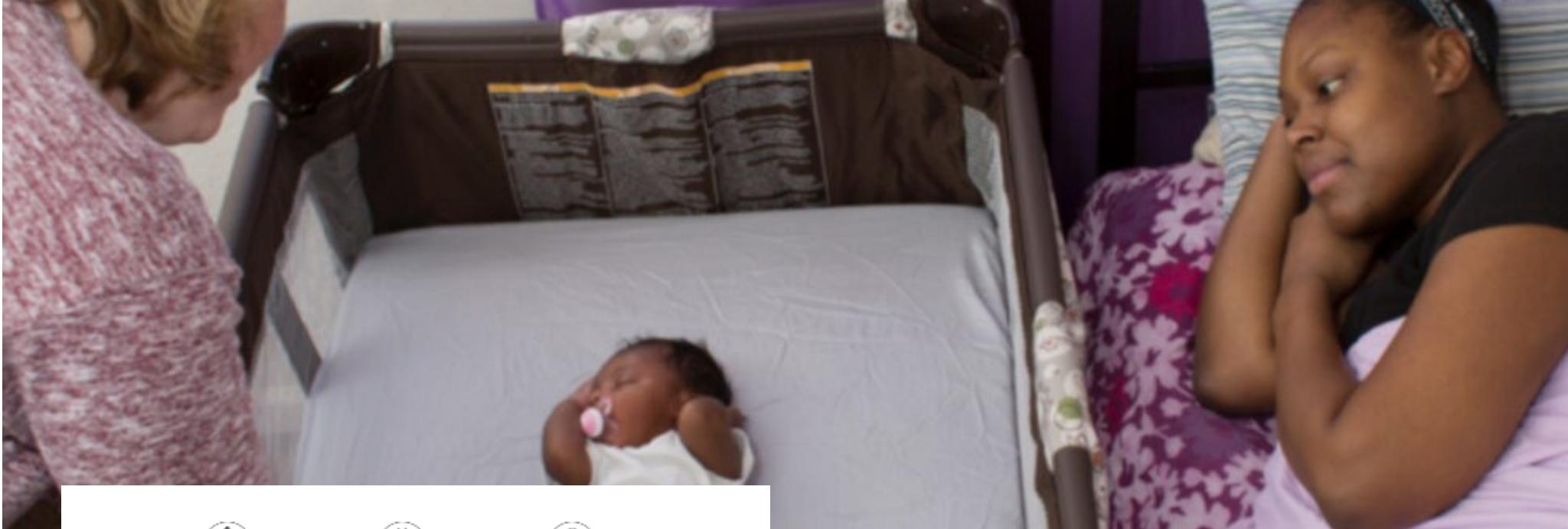
To better understand the needs that Missouri families are experiencing, CTF partnered with community-based service providers to administer a **family survey**, and held **listening sessions** with both leadership and frontline staff at these agencies.

Based on the feedback received, CTF will likely allocate funds to support the **immediate needs** of families with children and agencies dedicated to preventing child abuse and neglect. Additionally, CTF will continue to advance **long-term strategic priorities** related to home visiting, child sexual abuse prevention, and capacity-building for nonprofits.

Supplemental grant funds must be expended by December 2025, and CTF is awaiting approval by the General Assembly to begin releasing these funds.



CTF's Board of Directors reviews stakeholder feedback and considers recommendations for the use of American Rescue Plan Act supplemental funds



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POLICY UPDATE:

CTF develops Outcomes Rate Card to incentivize high-quality home visiting services in Missouri

Birth through age five is a critical time for a child's social and emotional development. Home visiting is a strong, evidence-based investment that governments can make to support child development and generate positive economic, health, and social outcomes for children and families. It is a home-based prevention service delivered by trained nurses, social workers, or child development specialists to promote infant, child, and maternal health. [Estimates](#) indicate that by working to ensure that babies are born at term (at or after 37 weeks gestation), home visiting can reduce the need for child and maternal medical care services during delivery and infancy, the likelihood of the need for special education, and lost household and labor market productivity.

The *Children's Trust Fund of Missouri* (CTF), the state of Missouri's foundation for child abuse prevention, firmly believes in the power of investments in early childhood development services and, over its 37-year history, has allocated nearly \$68 million in public funding to community organizations across the state that work to alleviate child abuse and neglect. Included in this portfolio are grants to home visiting providers that deliver a range of home visiting models (e.g., *Parents as Teachers*, *Healthy Families America*) focused on achieving positive outcomes across maternal and child health, child welfare, and child development, among others. Through these grants, CTF has served more than 3,800 families to date and has become a hub for data, referrals, and resources to maximize home visiting outcomes.

"This is excellent. I'm pleased CTF has made the decision to take a look at connecting payments to outputs and outcomes"

-Ron Tompkins, Nurses for Newborns Foundation

Currently, home visiting in Missouri is reimbursed on a purely fee-for-service (FFS) basis: funders pay agencies to carry out services irrespective of agency performance or the impact achieved on children and families. In 2020, CTF launched an effort to explore how it might shift away from this traditional FFS funding structure to an outcomes-based funding (OBF) structure—shifting from paying for services to paying for discrete, measurable outcomes.

CTF worked with *Social Finance* to design an [outcomes rate card](#) (ORC), an OBF structure that includes a menu of high-priority outcome metrics CTF hopes to achieve and an associated payment, or "price," for each outcome achievement. Launched this month, the ORC provides an opportunity for home visiting providers to earn incremental new incentive funding based on the achievement of specific outcomes. In designing the ORC, CTF had several objectives in mind:

1. **Unite and articulate impact** by using incentive funding attached to a single set of priority metrics across all of CTF's contracted home visiting providers, regardless of the specific model they provide;

2. **Incentivize prenatal enrollment** given the low rates of prenatal enrollment at status quo, despite evidence showing better health outcomes for children and families who are enrolled before a child's birth; and

3. **Improve data entry** by rewarding providers for collecting more data and reporting it correctly, allowing CTF to more accurately measure and report on its overall impact.

To this end, the ORC is structured to include seven metrics related to complete data entry, maternal and child health, and workforce development. Each provider is eligible to receive incentive payments of up to 10% of its core funding from CTF.

"This is very exciting!"

-Shannon Mann, Children's Permanency Partnership

As we reflect on the design and launch of the ORC, CTF and Social Finance see three key elements that we believe will be crucial to the project's ongoing success and may also serve as lessons for future OBF projects.

1. **Engage providers throughout ORC design:** Ongoing engagement ensured that Social Finance and CTF were able to understand the local context of service delivery, generate early buy-in from providers, and ensure close integration with pre-existing funder and provider data collection requirements and processes.

2. **Establish a continuous cycle of reporting and feedback:** The ORC includes a quarterly cycle of data reporting and validation in order to calculate and provide incentive payments. This cycle is followed by a collaborative feedback process, including a provider-specific progress report and discussions on ORC metric performance and incentive payments. This cycle of reporting and feedback will provide ample opportunities to leverage data to better understand the impact and inform program or process adaptations. This process came to life for the first time in the first of two "pilot" cycles prior to the formal launch, enabling CTF and providers to test the process, address any points of confusion, and lay the groundwork for a successful launch.

3. **Balance impact with feasibility:** In an ideal world, every metric on the ORC would reward providers for positive incidences of outcome metrics (versus a mix of data entry and outcomes); however, in designing the rate card, Social Finance and CTF identified a need to start by strengthening provider data collection practices. The incentive payments for complete data entry allowed CTF to highlight areas where it aims to improve its data entry practices to more accurately measure the impact of its funding. This mix of metric types blends CTF's impact-first mindset with the reality of current data collection in the state.

By implementing OBF, CTF aims to ensure that limited taxpayer dollars are spent on interventions that work. CTF's ORC aims to lay the groundwork for OBF uptake across the state of Missouri—both through additional OBF projects by CTF and, hopefully, other payors within the state. By continuing to innovate on how public funds are spent, CTF and others can effectively scale impactful services and generate even more positive outcomes for additional children and families.

This article was co-authored and initially published on August 5, 2021, with *Social Finance*, a national impact financial and advisory nonprofit. The original publication of this article can be found [here](#).

Learn more about Social Finance's Public Sector work



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POLICY UPDATE:

The impact of House Bills 557 and 432 on Missouri's Kids

CTF is pleased to highlight the passage of **Missouri H.B. 557** and **H.B. 432**, both endorsed by CTF and signed by Governor Parson on July 14, 2021. Here are a few key provisions pertaining to CTF's mission:

H.B. 557

This bill includes the **"Residential Care Facility Notification Act,"** which immediately brings greater accountability to facilities caring for children who are exempt from state licensure, such as religious youth homes and private boarding schools.

This act requires that these entities to **notify the state that they exist** and are operating as residential care facilities and to subsequently **comply with DSS safety rules** for residential care facilities. The bill also:

- Sets specific guidelines for **meeting the basic needs of children** in these facilities' care
- Mandates specific routine **safety and health inspections**, as well as employee **background screenings** through the Missouri Department of Social Services (DSS)
- Creates provisions for legally removing children from and **closing down non-compliant facilities**, reducing the risk for cycles of abuse or neglect
- Outlines procedures for **ensuring swift child safety** in instances where abuse or neglect may have been reported

Missouri has notably lagged the nation in implementing these needed protective and preventative measures for children living in unlicensed facilities. However, despite being long overdue, H.B. 557 will create **positive and lasting change** – most notably keeping more Missouri children safe from abuse and neglect.



CTF is very grateful for all the work that went into passing HB 557, including the dozens of survivors who told their stories; Kelly Schultz, the Director of the Office of Child Advocate; Rep. Rudy Veit and Rep. Keri Ingle; and Jessica Seitz, Executive Director of Missouri KidsFirst.

Full bill details: <https://house.mo.gov/Bill.aspx?bill=HB557&year=2021&code=R>

H.B. 432

This bill puts into place a **"Birth Match"** process where the *State Registrar* and *Children's Division* share information to **identify children born in high risk situations**, including children born to parents who have previously had a termination of parental rights (TPR) or other serious criminal offense against a child.

Birth Match is used in only a handful of states across the nation and was recommended by the *US Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse Fatalities* in 2016.

The bill also requires *Children's Division* or other contracted entities to **offer voluntary supportive services**.

CTF is hopeful this bill will save lives of vulnerable infants, as it has in other states.

Full bill details: <https://house.mo.gov/Bill.aspx?bill=HB432&year=2021&code=R>

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What is First-Hand Insights?

We launched **First-Hand Insights** in 2021 to give our stakeholders **reliable information and real-life inspiration**.

We believe those working hardest on behalf of children deserve to hear directly from trusted sources and thought leaders in their field. Think of it as **"news for CTF insiders,"** a periodic, first-hand look at the tangible steps we take to protect and strengthen Missouri's kids and families.

KEEP IN TOUCH

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